

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7244

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 2912

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA (FOREIGN SERVICE TRAVEL) SA

SUBJECT: FOREIGN SERVICE TRAVEL

REF: STATE 109073

1. ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE I HAVE TAKEN UP WITH THE SAUDIS THE MATTER OF VISAS FOR JEWISH AMERICANS. THERE WAS NO PROBLEM IN THEIR INCLUSION IN MASS VISAS GIVEN TO NEWSMEN ACCOMPANYING THE SECRETARY'S PARTY. THERE WAS A MINOR PROBLEM IN GETTING A VISA FOR A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE TOUR, BUT THIS WAS HANDLED BY GIVING VISAS AT THE AIRPORT. IN THE LATTER CASE, THE FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED ME EXPLICITLY NOT TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT; THAT HE WOULD HANDLE IT QUIETLY. HE DID. (FYI: BOTH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR BELIEVE THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION ON VISA APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE ELIMINATED. THE KING INSISTS ON ITS RETENTION.)

2. IN THE CASE OF INDIVIDUAL VISAS, HOWEVER, I HAVE BEEN MUCH LESS SUCCESSFUL. THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD ME LAST FALL THAT A VISA WOULD BE GIVEN TO JOSEPH KRAFT, BUT WHEN IT WAS REFERRED TO THE KING (ALL SUCH VISAS MUST GO THROUGH THE ROYAL DIWAN), HE REFUSED. THE FOREIGN MINISTER RAISED THE QUESTION ON FOUR SUBSEQUENT OCCASIONS AND EACH TIME THE KING REFUSED, THE LAST TIME SAYING HE NEVER WANTED TO HEAR THE NAME KRAFT AGAIN. (THE SAUDI

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PAGE 02 JIDDA 02912 261219Z

EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAD REPORTED THAT KRAFT WAS A WELL-KNOWN

DEFENDER OF ISRAEL AND AN ENEMY OF THE ARABS.) I TRIED
SUBSEQUENTLY TO GET A VISA FOR CY SULZBERGER OF THE "NEW
YORK TIMES" AND, ALTHOUGH HE WAS ALSO WARMLY RECOMMENDED BY THE
SAUDI AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO AND AMBASSADOR EILTS, THE KING
REFUSED. THE REASONS FOR THIS WERE NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR. I DO NOT
KNOW WHAT THE SAUDI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON REPORTED.

3. NO ONE IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE COULD MAKE A DECISION ON THE
VISA FOR MR. CHASE EXCEPT THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND IF I WERE TO
TAKE IT UP WITH HIM, HE WOULD HAVE TO REFER IT
TO THE KING, WHO VERY LIKELY WOULD REFUSE.

4. I RECOMMEND THEREFORE THAT MR. CHASE USE HIS VISA AND THAT
WHEN HE FILLS OUT HIS LANDING CARD HE STRIKE THROUGH THE LINE
ASKING FOR RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION. WE WILL MEET HIM AT THE AIR-
PORT AND UNLESS
THE SAUDI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS INFORMED THE
FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT IT HAS GIVEN THE VISA BY MISTAKE AND IT
SHOULD BE CANCELLED (IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE EMBASSS WOULD
ADMIT SUCH ERROR), MR. CHASE VERY LIKELY COULD COME IN
EASILY.

5. THERE IS NO WAY THIS COULD BE TAKEN UP WITH THE FOREIGN
MINISTER WITHOUT GETTING THE SAUDI CONSULAR OFFICER AND THE
DCM INTO TROUBLE. AMBASSADOR SOWAYEL WOULD CERTAINLY DENY THAT
HE HAD ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT.

6. IF YOU BELIEVE THEY WOULD NOT INFORM THEIR HOME OFFICE, YOU
MIGHT WISH TO INFORM THE SAUDI DCM OR VISA OFFICER MR. CHASE
WILL BE GOING INTO THE KINGDOM WITH HIS VISA. YOU MIGHT TELL
THEM THAT WE WILL HANDLE THE MATTER VERY DISCREETLY
HERE AND THAT MR. CHASE WILL HAVE NO CONTACT WHATSOEVER WITH
ANY SAUDIS. IF THEY SAY THEY HAVE ALREADY REPORTED THE
MATTER TO JIDDA OR BELIEVE THAT HE WOULD BE STOPPED AT THE
AIRPORT, I WOULD THEN, AS A LAST RESORT, RAISE THE MATTER WITH
THE FOREIGN MINISTER.
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